

IN THE UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

In re Patent Application: Renee M. Kovales

Confirmation No.: 2011

Application No.: 09/782,772

Examiner: PHAN, Joseph T.

Filed: February 13, 2001

Group Art Unit: 2614

Title: "Recording and Receiving Voice Mail with
Freeform Bookmarks"

Mail Stop Appeal Brief-Patents
Commissioner for Patents
P.O. Box 1450
Alexandria, VA 22313-1450

TRANSMITTAL OF APPEAL BRIEF

Sir:

Transmitted herewith is the Appeal Brief in this application with respect to the Notice of Appeal filed on **July 15, 2009**.

() The fee for filing this Appeal Brief is **\$540.00** (37 CFR 41.20).

(X) No Additional Fee Required.

(complete (a) or (b) as applicable)

The proceedings herein are for a patent application and the provision of 37 CFR 1.136 (a) apply.

() (a) Applicant petitions for an extension of time under 37 CFR 1.136 (fees: CFR 1.17(a)-(d)) for the total number of months checked below:

- () one month \$130.00
- () two months \$490.00
- () three months \$1110.00
- () four months \$1730.00

() The extension fee has already been filed in this application

(X) (b) Applicant believes that no extension of time is required. However, this conditional petition is being made to provide for the possibility that applicant had inadvertently overlooked the need for a petition and fee for extension of time.

Please charge to Deposit Account 09-0461/RSW920000127US1 the sum of **\$0.00**. At any time during the pendency of this application, please charge any fees required or credit any over payment to Deposit Account 09-0461/RSW920000127US1 pursuant to 37 CFR 1.25. Additionally please charge any fees to Deposit Account 09-0461/RSW920000127US1 under CFR 1.16 through 1.21 inclusive, and any other section in the Title 37 of the Code of Federal Regulations that may regulate fees.

Respectfully submitted,

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IN THE UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

In the Patent Application of

Renee M. Kovales et al.

Application No. 09/782,772

Filed: February 13, 2001

For: Recording and Receiving Voice Mail
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APPEAL BRIEF

Mail Stop Appeal Brief - Patents
Commissioner for Patents
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Alexandria, VA 22313-1450

Sir:

This is an Appeal Brief under Rule 41.37 appealing the decision of the Primary Examiner dated April 15, 2009 (the “final Office Action” or “Action”). Each of the topics required by Rule 41.37 is presented herewith and is labeled appropriately.

I. Real Party in Interest

The real party in interest is International Business Machines Corporation (“IBM”) having a principal place of business at New Orchard Road, Armonk, NY 10504.

II. Related Appeals and Interferences

There are no appeals or interferences related to the present application of which the Appellant is aware.

III. Status of Claims

Claims 2, 4-5, 15-16, 34, 36, 42-43, 59-60, 69-70, and 89-91 have been previously cancelled without prejudice or disclaimer.

Claims 1, 3, 6-14, 17-33, 35, 37-41, 44-58, 61-68, and 71-88 are pending in the application and stand finally rejected.

Accordingly, Appellant appeals from the final rejection of claims 1, 3, 6-14, 17-33, 35, 37-41, 44-58, 61-68, and 71-88, which claims are presented in the Appendix.

IV. Status of Amendments

No amendments have been filed subsequent to the Office Action of April 15, 2009, from which Appellant takes this appeal.

V. Summary of Claimed Subject Matter

The claimed subject matter discloses methods, systems, and computer-readable media related to recording and receiving voice mail. In these methods, system, and computer-readable media, bookmarks are provided for a voice mail message by a caller (100) leaving the voice mail message, and a bookmarked message is created from the voice mail message and the bookmarks. (Appellant's specification, pp. 8-16). At least two of the bookmarks are used to mark respective segments of the voice mail message as having degrees of importance, and at least some of the bookmarks correspond to respective topics and some of the respective segments have different ones of the degrees of importance. (Appellant's specification, pp. 10-11, 14).

Turning to Appellant's specific claims,

Claim 1 recites:

A method comprising:

providing bookmarks for a voice mail message by a caller (100) leaving the voice mail message (*Appellant's specification, pp. 8-16*); and

creating a bookmarked message from the voice mail message and the bookmarks (*Appellant's specification, pp. 8-16*),

wherein at least two of the bookmarks are used to mark respective segments of the voice mail message as having degrees of importance, and wherein at least some of the bookmarks correspond to respective topics and some of the respective segments have different ones of the degrees of importance (*Appellant's specification, pp. 10-11, 14*).

Claim 33 recites:

A system for voice mail messages, comprising:

means (101) for leaving a voice mail message by a caller (100) *Appellant's specification, pp. 8-16*);

means for providing bookmarks for the voice mail message by the caller (*Appellant's specification, pp. 8-16*); and

means for creating a bookmarked message from the voice mail message and the bookmarks (*Appellant's specification, pp. 8-16*),

wherein at least two of the bookmarks are used to mark respective segments of the voice mail message as having degrees of importance, and wherein at least some of the bookmarks correspond to respective topics and some of the respective segments have different ones of the degrees of importance (*Appellant's specification, pp. 10-11, 14*).

Claim 57 recites:

A computer-readable medium comprising computer program instructions, the computer program instructions comprising:

computer-readable program code configured to create bookmarks for a voice mail message by a caller (100) leaving the voice mail message (*Appellant's specification, pp. 8-16*);

wherein at least two of the bookmarks are used to mark respective segments of the voice mail message as having degrees of importance, and wherein at least some of the bookmarks correspond to respective topics and some of the respective segments have different ones of the

degrees of importance, wherein the computer-readable medium is a computer-readable storage medium (*Appellant's specification, pp. 8-16*).

VI. Grounds of Rejection to be Reviewed on Appeal

The Office Action raised the following grounds of rejection.

(1) Claims 1, 3, 6-7, 12-14, 17-20, 22-33, 35, 37, 41, 44-47, 49-58, 61-62, 67-68, 71-72, 74-81, and 83-88 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being obvious over U.S. Patent No. 5,943,402 to Hamel et al. (“Hamel) in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,442,243 to Valco et al. (“Valco”).

(2) Claims 8-10, 12, 38, 40, and 63-66 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being obvious over Hamel, Valco, and U.S. Patent No. 6,970,906 to Parsons et al. (“Parsons”).

(3) Claims 11, 21, 39, 48, and 73 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being obvious over Hamel, Valco, and U.S. Patent No. 5,742,735 to Haddock (“Haddock”).

According, Appellant hereby requests review of each of these grounds of rejection in the present appeal.

VII. Argument

(1) Claims 1, 3, 6-7, 12-14, 17-20, 22-33, 35, 37, 41, 44-47, 49-58, 61-62, 67-68, 71-72, 74-81, and 83-88 are patentable over Hamel and Valco:

Claims 1, 3, 6, 14, 17-20, 23, and 25-32:

Claim 1 recites:

A method comprising:
providing bookmarks for a voice mail message by a caller (100) leaving the voice mail message; and
creating a bookmarked message from the voice mail message and the bookmarks, *wherein at least two of the bookmarks are used to mark respective segments of the voice mail message as having degrees of importance, and wherein at least some of the bookmarks correspond to respective topics and some of the respective segments have different ones of the degrees of importance.*
(Emphasis added).

For the purposes of the present appeal, the patentability of dependent claims 3, 6, 14, 17-20, 23, and 25-32 under this section stands or falls with the patentability of claim 1.

Hamel and Valco do not render the subject matter of claim 1 obvious. Specifically, Hamel and Valco fail to teach or suggest, either jointly or separately, the method recited in claim 1.

Hamel is directed to “voice messaging systems having a capability to edit voice messages at user selectable points within a voice message.” (Hamel, col. 1, lines 6-9). In particular, Hamel teaches the insertion of acoustic interrupts into a voice mail message such that independent action can be taken on different segments of the voice mail message. (*Id.*, col. 1, line 55 to col. 2, line 2). These actions include

replaying the segment, forwarding the segment to an addressee with comments, forwarding the entire message to an addressee with embedded (potentially segmented) comments, deleting the segment, skipping playback of the segment, or partitioning the segment into smaller segments.

(*Id.*)

Although Hamel does teach the segmentation of individual voice mail messages using these acoustic interrupts, Hamel fails to teach or suggest that “at least two of the bookmarks are used to mark respective segments of the voice mail message as having degrees of importance” and that “some of the respective segments have different ones of the degrees of importance,” as recited in claim 1. The final Office Action appears to agree with this position, stating that “Hamel is silent on disclosing the bookmarks corresponds [sic] to topics and segments having different ones of the degrees of importance.” (Action, p. 3).

In accordance with this acknowledged lack of teaching in Hamel, the Action turns to Valco. However, Valco fails to remedy the deficiencies of Hamel. Specifically, Valco also fails to teach or suggest that “at least two **of the bookmarks** are used to mark respective segments of the voice mail message as having degrees of importance” and that “some of the respective segments have different ones of the degrees of importance.” (Claim 1) (emphasis added).

In this regard, the Action cites to Valco’s teaching that a caller finishing a voice mail message “will have the option to review the message, to re-record the message, to mark it urgent, or to mark it private.” (Action, p. 3) (citing to Valco, col. 12, lines 55-59). Nevertheless, this portion of Valco merely refers to the option of marking an entire voice mail message as urgent, not marking individual segments within a voice mail message as having different degrees of importance, as recited in claim 1. Thus, because Valco only teaches marking an entire voice mail

message with a single degree of importance, Valco *cannot* teach or suggest a single voice mail message having different degrees of importance associated therewith.

Moreover, even if *arguendo* a combination of Hamel and Valco did teach the segmentation of a voice mail message in which different segments of the message had different degrees of importance, such teaching would still be insufficient to render the method of claim 1 obvious. Specifically, claim 1 explicitly recites that segments in the voice mail message are marked as having different degrees of importance **by the bookmarks** segmenting the message. Accordingly, claim 1 recites bookmarks that not only segment a voice mail message, but also indicate the degree of importance associated with each segment. Neither Hamel nor Valco teaches or suggests this subject matter. Hamel merely teaches acoustic interrupts that segment a voice mail message; it does not teach or suggest that these acoustic interrupts indicate or mark any information about the subject matter of the segments. Further, Valco does not teach or suggest voice mail message segmentation at all. In light of these considerations, it is impossible for Hamel and Valco to teach or suggest that “at least two of the bookmarks *are used to mark respective segments of the voice mail message as having degrees of importance.*” (Claim 1).

Under the analysis required by *Graham v. John Deere*, 383 U.S. 1 (1966) to support a rejection under § 103, the scope and content of the prior art must first be determined, followed by an assessment of the differences between the prior art and the claim at issue in view of the ordinary skill in the art. The Supreme Court has recently reaffirmed that the *Graham* factors “continue to define the inquiry that controls” obviousness rejections under § 103. *KSR Int’l v. Teleflex Inc.*, 550 U.S. 398 (2007). In the present case, the scope and content of the prior art, as evidenced by Hamel and Valco, did not include the claimed subject matter, particularly that “at

least two of the bookmarks are used to mark respective segments of the voice mail message as having degrees of importance” and that “some of the respective segments have different ones of the degrees of importance.” (Claim 1).

The differences between the cited prior art and the indicated claims are significant because the claimed subject matter allows for the segmentation of a voice mail message and the assignment of a level of importance to the segments using only bookmarks. Thus, the claimed subject matter provides features and advantages not known or available in the cited prior art. Consequently, the cited prior art will not support a rejection of claim 1 under 35 U.S.C. § 103 and *Graham*. Therefore, for at least these reasons, no *prima facie* case of obviousness has been established for claim 1 in light of Hamel and Valco. As such, the rejection of claim 1 and its dependent claims should not be sustained.

Claims 33, 35, 41, 44-47, 50-56:

Claim 33 recites:

A system for voice mail messages, comprising:
means for leaving a voice mail message by a caller;
means for providing bookmarks for the voice mail message by the caller; and
means for creating a bookmarked message from the voice mail message and the
bookmarks,
wherein at least two of the bookmarks are used to mark respective segments of the
voice mail message as having degrees of importance, and wherein at least some of the
bookmarks correspond to respective topics and some of the respective segments have
different ones of the degrees of importance.

(Emphasis added).

For the purposes of the present appeal, the patentability of dependent claims 35, 41, 44-47, and 50-56 under this rejection stands or falls with the patentability of independent claim 33.

In contrast, Hamel and Valco do not render the subject matter of claim 33. Specifically, as amply demonstrated above, Hamel and Valco fail to teach or suggest a system for bookmarking voice mail messages in which “at least two of the bookmarks are used to mark respective segments of the voice mail message as having degrees of importance” and “some of the respective segments have different ones of the degrees of importance.” (Claim 33).

Under the analysis required by *Graham v. John Deere*, 383 U.S. 1 (1966) to support a rejection under § 103, the scope and content of the prior art must first be determined, followed by an assessment of the differences between the prior art and the claim at issue in view of the ordinary skill in the art. The Supreme Court has recently reaffirmed that the *Graham* factors “continue to define the inquiry that controls” obviousness rejections under § 103. *KSR Int’l v. Teleflex Inc.*, 550 U.S. 398 (2007). In the present case, the scope and content of the prior art, as evidenced by Hamel and Valco, did not include the claimed subject matter, particularly that “at least two of the bookmarks are used to mark respective segments of the voice mail message as having degrees of importance” and that “some of the respective segments have different ones of the degrees of importance.” (Claim 33).

The differences between the cited prior art and the indicated claims are significant because the claimed subject matter allows for the segmentation of a voice mail message and the assignment of a level of importance to the segments using only bookmarks. Thus, the claimed subject matter provides features and advantages not known or available in the cited prior art. Consequently, the cited prior art will not support a rejection of claim 33 under 35 U.S.C. § 103 and *Graham*. Therefore, for at least these reasons, no *prima facie* case of obviousness has been

established for claim 33 in light of Hamel and Valco. As such, the rejection of claim 33 and its dependent claims should not be sustained.

Claim 57-58, 61, 67-68, 71-72, and 75-81:

Claim 57 recites:

A computer-readable medium comprising computer program instructions, the computer program instructions comprising:

computer-readable program code configured to create bookmarks for a voice mail message by a caller;

wherein *at least two of the bookmarks are used to mark respective segments of the voice mail message as having degrees of importance*, and wherein at least some of the bookmarks correspond to respective topics and *some of the respective segments have different ones of the degrees of importance*, wherein the computer-readable medium is a computer-readable storage medium.

(Emphasis added).

For the purposes of the present appeal, the patentability of claims 58, 61, 67-68, 71-72, and 75-81 under this rejection stands or falls with the patentability of independent claim 57.

Hamel and Valco do not render the subject matter of claim 57. Specifically, as amply demonstrated above, Hamel and Valco fail to teach or suggest a system for bookmarking voice mail messages in which “at least two of the bookmarks are used to mark respective segments of the voice mail message as having degrees of importance” and “some of the respective segments have different ones of the degrees of importance.” (Claim 57).

Under the analysis required by *Graham v. John Deere*, 383 U.S. 1 (1966) to support a rejection under § 103, the scope and content of the prior art must first be determined, followed by an assessment of the differences between the prior art and the claim at issue in view of the ordinary skill in the art. The Supreme Court has recently reaffirmed that the *Graham* factors

“continue to define the inquiry that controls” obviousness rejections under § 103. *KSR Int’l v. Teleflex Inc.*, 550 U.S. 398 (2007). In the present case, the scope and content of the prior art, as evidenced by Hamel and Valco, did not include the claimed subject matter, particularly that “at least two of the bookmarks are used to mark respective segments of the voice mail message as having degrees of importance” and that “some of the respective segments have different ones of the degrees of importance.” (Claim 57).

The differences between the cited prior art and the indicated claims are significant because the claimed subject matter allows for the segmentation of a voice mail message and the assignment of a level of importance to the segments using only bookmarks. Thus, the claimed subject matter provides features and advantages not known or available in the cited prior art. Consequently, the cited prior art will not support a rejection of claim 57 under 35 U.S.C. § 103 and *Graham*. Therefore, for at least these reasons, no *prima facie* case of obviousness has been established for claim 57 in light of Hamel and Valco. As such, the rejection of claim 57 and its dependent claims should not be sustained.

Additionally, various dependent claims subject to the present rejection recite subject matter that is further patentable over the cited prior art. Specific, non-exclusive examples follow.

Claims 7, 37, and 62:

Claim 7 recites “wherein at least one of the bookmarks corresponds to one or more special types of information in the voice mail message.” Claims 37 and 62 recite similar subject matter. In this regard, the final Office Action cites again to Valco’s teaching that an entire voice mail message may be marked as either “urgent” or “private.” (Action, p. 4) (citing to Valco, col.

12, lines 55-59). Appellant wishes to point out, however, that nowhere in this portion of Valco, or anywhere else in the cited prior art is it taught that a “**bookmark** corresponds to one or more special types of information in the voice mail message.” (Claim 7) (emphasis added). The cited teachings of Valco are simply insufficient to establish a *prima facie* case of obviousness for claims 7, 37, and 62. Consequently, for at least these additional reasons, the rejection of claims 7, 37, and 62 should not be sustained.

Claim 12:

Claim 12 depends from claim 7, and recites that a special type of information is an e-mail address. Appellant first notes that because Hamel and Valco fail to teach that a “bookmark corresponds to one or more special types of information” as recited in claim 7, Hamel and Valco *cannot* teach or suggest this additional subject matter.

While the final Office Action rejects claim 12 on the basis of Hamel and Valco alone, Appellant notes that the final Office Action makes no other reference to claim 12 in this rejection. Accordingly, the Examiner has failed to establish any basis of rejection for claim 12 under Hamel and Valco. “The key to supporting any rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 103 is the clear articulation of the reason(s) why the claimed invention would have been obvious.” MPEP § 2143; *see also KSR Int’l Co. v. Teleflex, Inc.*, 550 U.S. 398, ____ (2007) (“To facilitate review, [the Examiner’s] analysis should be made explicit”). Accordingly, no *prima facie* case of obviousness has been made for claim 12, and the rejection of claim 12 based on Hamel and Valco should not be sustained for at least these additional reasons.

Claim 13:

Claim 13 recites additional subject matter related to the “special type of information” recited in claim 7. Appellant first notes that because Hamel and Valco fail to teach that a “bookmark corresponds to one or more special types of information” as recited in claims 7 Hamel and Valco *cannot* teach or suggest this additional subject matter.

Claim 13 further recites “wherein at least one of the special types of information is a protection or confidentiality indicator.” In this regard, the final Office Action merely cites to the same tired portion of Valco that teaches marking an entire voice mail message as “private.” (Action, p. 5) (citing to Valco, col. 12, lines 55-59). In response, Appellant notes that marking an entire voice mail message as private does not read on or suggest that a **bookmark** used to segment the voice mail message indicates such a marking in and of itself. For at least these additional reasons, the rejection of claim 13 under Hamel and Valco should not be sustained.

Claim 22:

Claim 22 recites “storing the bookmarks and the voice mail message separately as the bookmarked message.” Regarding this subject matter, the final Office Action cites to Hamel’s teaching that an acoustic bullet point can be suppressed or deleted. (Action, p. 6) (citing to Hamel, Fig. 2C step 85 and Fig. 2D steps 110/120a). In response, Appellant notes that this teaching is not necessarily indicative of storing the acoustic bullet points separately from its corresponding voice mail message. Most voice mail messages are recorded digitally, thereby enabling portions of a voice mail message containing recorded acoustic bullet points to be suppressed or deleted through digital manipulation.

The final Office Action has failed to identify any teaching or suggestion in Hamel and Valco that indicates storing a voice mail message and bookmarks corresponding to the voice mail message separately. Consequently, the Action has failed to establish *prima facie* obviousness for claim 22, and the rejection of claim 22 should not be sustained for at least these reasons.

Claims 24, 49, and 74:

Claims 24, 49, and 74 recite “announcing, for the bookmarked message, a number of the bookmarked segments in the voice mail message.” In this regard, the final Office Action cites to various portions of Valco and Hamel, none of which teaches or suggests announcing **a number** of the bookmarked segments in the message. Appellant notes that here the Examiner is reading teachings from Valco and Hamel that simply do not exist. Consequently, the rejection of claims 24, 49, and 74 should be reconsidered and withdrawn.

(2) Claims 8-10, 12, 38, 40, and 63-66 are patentable over Hamel, Valco, and Parsons:

The rejection of claims 8-10, 12, 38, 40, and 63-66 should not be sustained for at least the same reasons given above in favor of the patentability of independent claims 1, 33, and 57, respectively.

Additionally, each of claims 8-10, 12, 38, 40, and 63-66 is further dependent on one of claims 7, 37, and 62 each of which recites that “at least one of the bookmarks corresponds to one or more special types of information in the voice mail message.” As has been amply demonstrated above, Valco and Hamer fail to teach or suggest the subject matter recited in

claims 7, 37, and 62. Appellant further notes that Parsons, which is directed to “providing selective access to enterprise voice mail messages from a remote device” cannot teach this subject matter, since it fails to teach or suggests bookmarks in voice mail messages at all. (Parsons, col. 1, lines 36-38).

In light of these considerations, the combination of Valco, Hamer, and Parsons simply cannot teach or suggest the additional subject matter related to the “special types of information” to which the voice mail bookmarks correspond, as recited in claims 7, 37, and 62. Consequently, no *prima facie* case of obviousness has been established for claims 8-10, 12, 38, 40, and 63-66. For at least these additional reasons, the rejection of claims 8-10, 12, 38, 40, and 63-66 should not be sustained.

(3) Claims 11, 21, 39, 48, and 73 are patentable over Hamel, Valco, and Haddock:

The rejection of claims 11, 21, 39, 48, and 73 should not be sustained for at least the same reasons given above in favor of the patentability of independent claims 1, 33, and 57, respectively. Accordingly, for the purposes of the present appeal, the patentability of claims 11 and 21 stands or falls with the patentability of independent claim 1. Similarly, the patentability of claims 39 and 48 stands or falls with the patentability of independent claim 33, and the patentability of claim 73 stands or falls with the patentability of independent claim 57.

In view of the foregoing, it is submitted that the final rejection of the pending claims is improper and should not be sustained. Therefore, a reversal of the Rejection of April 15, 2009 is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,

DATE: January 14, 2010

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VIII. CLAIMS APPENDIX

1. (previously presented) A method comprising:
providing bookmarks for a voice mail message by a caller leaving the voice mail message; and
creating a bookmarked message from the voice mail message and the bookmarks,
wherein at least two of the bookmarks are used to mark respective segments of the voice mail message as having degrees of importance, and wherein at least some of the bookmarks correspond to respective topics and some of the respective segments have different ones of the degrees of importance.
2. (cancelled)
3. (previously presented) The method according to claim 1, further comprising playing the bookmarked message to a listener.
- 4-5. (cancelled)
6. (previously presented) The method according to claim 1, wherein a default degree of importance is associated with at least one of the respective segments.

7. (previously presented) The method according to claim 1, wherein at least one of the bookmarks corresponds to one or more special types of information in the voice mail message.

8. (original) The method according to claim 7, wherein at least one of the special types of information is a callback telephone number for the caller.

9. (previously presented) The method according to claim 7, wherein at least one of the special types of information is a callback time and/or date to use when responding to the voice mail message.

10. (original) The method according to claim 7, wherein at least one of the special types of information is a name of the caller.

11. (original) The method according to claim 7, wherein at least one of the special types of information is a Uniform Resource Locator (URL).

12. (original) The method according to claim 7, wherein at least one of the special types of information is an e-mail address.

13. (original) The method according to claim 7, wherein at least one of the special types of information is a protection or confidentiality indicator.

14. (previously presented) The method according to claim 1, further comprising using at least one of the bookmarks to perform- actions selectively on the respective segments of the voice mail message.

15-16. (cancelled)

17. (previously presented) The method according to claim 14, wherein the selected respective segments are associated with one or more special types of information in the voice mail message.

18. (previously presented) The method according to claim 14, wherein the actions comprise one or more of saving, deleting, forwarding, listening, skipping, or repeating one or more of the selected respective segments.

19. (previously presented) The method according to claim 18, wherein the actions further comprise marking at least one of the selected respective segments as protected or confidential.

20. (previously presented) The method according to claim 19, further comprising forwarding the segments marked as protected or confidential to another party.

21. (previously presented) The method according to claim 17, wherein at least one of the special types of information comprises a Uniform Resource Locator (URL) and where at least one of the actions comprises automatically establishing a connection to the URL.

22. (previously presented) The method according to claim 1, wherein creating the bookmarked message further comprises storing the bookmarks and the voice mail message separately as the bookmarked message.

23. (previously presented) The method according to claim 1, wherein creating the bookmarked message further comprises storing the bookmarks and the voice mail message intermingled as the bookmarked message.

24. (previously presented) The method according to claim 3, further comprising announcing, for the bookmarked message, a number of the bookmarked segments in the voice mail message.

25. (previously presented) The method according to claim 1, further comprising announcing, when playing the voice mail message, the degrees of importance in the voice mail message.

26. (previously presented) The method according to claim 1, further comprising announcing, when playing the voice mail message, a number of the respective segments and the degrees of importance.

27. (previously presented) The method according to claim 7, further comprising announcing, when playing the voice mail message, the special types of information in the voice mail message.

28. (previously presented) The method according to claim 7, wherein particular ones of the special types of information are required, and further comprising prompting the caller to provide input for each of the particular ones of the special types of information for which no bookmark is otherwise provided.

29. (previously presented) The method according to claim 1, further comprising associating one or more audio cues with one or more of the bookmarks of the voice mail message.

30. (previously presented) The method according to claim 29, further comprising:
playing the bookmarked message to a listener; and

incorporating the one or more associated audio cues along with respective portions of the voice mail message corresponding to the bookmarks.

31. (previously presented) The method according to claim 30, wherein incorporating the one or more associated audio cues further comprises incorporating each associated audio cue with its respective portion of the voice mail message.

32. (previously presented) The method according to claim 30, wherein incorporating the one or more associated audio cues further comprises incorporating each associated audio cue in-line with its respective portion of the voice mail message.

33. (previously presented) A system for voice mail messages, comprising: means for leaving a voice mail message by a caller;

means for providing bookmarks for the voice mail message by the caller; and

means for creating a bookmarked message from the voice mail message and the bookmarks,

wherein at least two of the bookmarks are used to mark respective segments of the voice mail message as having degrees of importance, and wherein at least some of the bookmarks correspond to respective topics and some of the respective segments have different ones of the degrees of importance.

34. (cancelled)

35. (previously presented) The system according to claim 33, further comprising means for playing the bookmarked message to a listener.

36. (cancelled)

37. (previously presented) The system according to claim 33, wherein at least one of the bookmarks corresponds to one or more special types of information in the voice mail message.

38. (original) The system according to claim 37, wherein the special types of information comprise one or more of: (1) a callback telephone number for the caller; (2) a callback time at which to respond to the voice mail message; and/or (3) a callback date on which to respond to the voice mail message.

39. (original) The system according to claim 37, wherein at least one of the special types of information is a Uniform Resource Locator (URL).

40. (original) The system according to claim 37, wherein at least one of the special types of information is a protection or confidentiality indicator.

41. (previously presented) The system according to claim 33, further comprising means for using at least one of the bookmarks to perform actions selectively on the respective segments of the voice mail message.

42-43. (cancelled)

44. (previously presented) The system according to claim 41, wherein the actions comprise one or more of saving, deleting, forwarding, listening, skipping, or repeating one or more of the selected respective segments.

45. (previously presented) The system according to claim 44, wherein the actions further comprise marking at least one of the selected respective segments as protected or confidential.

46. (previously presented) The system according to claim 45, further comprising forwarding the marked segments to another party.

47. (previously presented) The system according to claim 41, wherein the selected respective segments are associated with one or more special types of information in the voice mail message.

48. (previously presented) The system according to claim 47, wherein at least one of the special types of information comprises a Uniform Resource Locator (URL) and where at least one of the actions comprises automatically establishing a connection to the URL.

49. (previously presented) The system according to claim 35, further comprising means for announcing, for the bookmarked message, a number of the bookmarked segments in the voice mail message.

50. (previously presented) The system according to claim 33, further comprising means for announcing, before playing the voice mail message, the degrees of importance in the voice mail message.

51. (previously presented) The system according to claim 37, further comprising means for announcing, after playing the voice mail message, the special types of information in the voice mail message.

52. (previously presented) The system according to claim 37, wherein particular ones of the special types of information are required, and further comprising means for prompting the caller to provide input for each of the particular ones of the special types of information for which no bookmark is otherwise provided.

53. (previously presented) The system according to claim 33, further comprising means for associating one or more audio cues with one or more of the bookmarks of the voice mail message.

54. (previously presented) The system according to claim 53, further comprising:
means for playing the bookmarked message to a listener; and
means for incorporating the one or more associated audio cues along with respective portions of the voice mail message corresponding to the bookmarks.

55. (original) The system according to claim 54, wherein the means for incorporating the one or more associated audio cues further comprises means for incorporating each associated audio cue with its respective portion of the voice mail message.

56. (original) The system according to claim 54, wherein the means for incorporating the one or more associated audio cues further comprises means for incorporating each associated audio cue in-line with its respective portion of the voice mail message.

57. (previously presented) A computer-readable medium comprising computer program instructions, the computer program instructions comprising:

computer-readable program code configured to create bookmarks for a voice mail message by a caller leaving the voice mail message;

wherein at least two of the bookmarks are used to mark respective segments of the voice mail message as having degrees of importance, and wherein at least some of the bookmarks correspond to respective topics and some of the respective segments have different ones of the degrees of importance, wherein the computer-readable medium is a computer-readable storage medium.

58. (previously presented) The computer-readable medium according to claim 57, further comprising computer-readable program code configured to play the bookmarked message to a listener.

59-60. (cancelled)

61. (previously presented) The computer-readable medium according to claim 57, wherein a default degree of importance is associated with at least one of the respective segments.

62. (previously presented) The computer-readable medium according to claim 57, wherein at least one of the bookmarks corresponds to one or more special types of information in the voice mail message.

63. (previously presented) The computer-readable medium according to claim 62, wherein the special types of information comprise one or more of: (1) a callback telephone number for the caller; (2) a callback time at which to respond to the voice mail message; and/or (3) a callback date on which to respond to the voice mail message.

64. (previously presented) The computer-readable medium according to claim 62, wherein at least one of the special types of information is a name of the caller.

65. (previously presented) The computer-readable medium according to claim 62, wherein at least one of the special types of information is an e-mail address.

66. (previously presented) The computer-readable medium according to claim 62, wherein at least one of the special types of information is a protection or confidentiality indicator.

67. (previously presented) The computer-readable medium according to claim 57, further comprising computer-readable program code configured to use the bookmarks to navigate from one topic of the voice mail message to another.

68. (previously presented) The computer-readable medium according to claim 58, further comprising computer-readable program code configured to use at least one of the bookmarks to perform actions selectively on the respective segments of the voice mail message.

69-70. (cancelled)

71. (previously presented) The computer-readable medium according to claim 68, wherein the actions comprise one or more of: saving; deleting; skipping; forwarding; listening; repeating; and marking one or more of the selected respective segments.

72. (previously presented) The computer-readable medium according to claim 68, wherein the selected respective segments are associated with one or more special types of information in the voice mail message.

73. (previously presented) The computer-readable medium according to claim 72, wherein at least one of the special types of information comprises a Uniform Resource Locator

(URL) and where at least one of the actions comprises automatically establishing a connection to the URL.

74. (previously presented) The computer-readable medium according to claim 58, further comprising computer-readable program code configured to announce, for the bookmarked message, a number of the bookmarked segments in the voice mail message.

75. (previously presented) The computer-readable medium according to claim 57, further comprising computer-readable program code configured to announce, when playing the voice mail message, a number of the respective segments and the degrees of importance.

76. (previously presented) The computer-readable medium according to claim 62, further comprising computer-readable program code configured to announce, after playing the voice mail message, a number of the special types of information in the voice mail message.

77. (previously presented) The computer-readable medium according to claim 62, wherein particular ones of the special types of information are required, and further comprising computer-readable program code configured to prompt the caller to provide input for each of the particular ones of the special types of information for which no bookmark is otherwise provided.

78. (previously presented) The computer-readable medium according to claim 58, further comprising computer-readable program code configured to associate one or more audio cues with one or more of the bookmarks of the voice mail message.

79. (previously presented) The computer-readable medium according to claim 78, further comprising:

computer-readable program code configured to play the bookmarked message to a listener; and

computer-readable program code configured to incorporate the one or more associated audio cues along with respective portions of the voice mail message corresponding to the bookmarks.

80. (previously presented) The computer-readable medium according to claim 79, wherein the computer-readable program code configured to incorporate the one or more associated audio cues further comprises computer-readable program code configured to incorporate each associated audio cue with its respective portion of the voice mail message.

81. (previously presented) The computer-readable medium according to claim 79, wherein the computer-readable program code configured to incorporate the one or more associated audio cues further comprises computer-readable program code configured to incorporate each associated audio cue in-line with its respective portion of the voice mail message.

82. (previously presented) The computer-readable medium according to claim 57, further comprising computer-readable program code configured to create a bookmarked message from the voice mail message and the bookmarks.

83. (previously presented) The computer-readable medium according to claim 57, further comprising computer-readable program code configured to announce, before playing the voice mail message, the degrees of importance in the voice mail message.

84. (previously presented) The computer-readable medium according to claim 57, further comprising computer-readable program code configured to announce, after playing the voice mail message, the degrees of importance in the voice mail message.

85. (previously presented) The computer-readable medium according to claim 57, further comprising computer-readable program code configured to announce, before playing the voice mail message, a number of the respective segments and the degrees of importance.

86. (previously presented) The computer-readable medium according to claim 57, further comprising computer-readable program code configured to announce, after playing the voice mail message, a number of the respective segments and the degrees of importance.

87. (previously presented) The computer-readable medium according to claim 62, further comprising computer-readable program code configured to announce, before playing the voice mail message, the special types of information in the voice mail message.

88. (previously presented) The computer-readable medium according to claim 62, further comprising computer-readable program code configured to announce, after playing the voice mail message, the special types of information in the voice mail message.

89-91. (cancelled)

IX. Evidence Appendix

None

X. Related Proceedings Appendix

None

XI. Certificate of Service

None